

Application No. 10/813,974
Amendment Dated January 31, 2011
Reply to Office Action Dated August 31, 2010

Remarks

Claims 1-42 are pending.

Claims 1-42 stand rejected

Claims 1 and 39 have been amended.

Claims 1-42 are submitted herein for review.

No new matter has been added.

In paragraphs 3-4 of the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to and rejected claims 1 and 39 based on confusion with the terms "second call center" and "second directory assistance call center." Applicants have corrected claims 1 and 39 to consistently use the term "second directory assistance call center."

Turning to the prior art, the Examiner has modified the previous prior art rejection and now rejects independent claims 1, 21 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the previously cited Schaffer (U.S. Patent No. 6,385,312) and Sonesh (U.S. Patent No. 6,046,762) in view of the newly cited Lautenschlager (U.S. Patent No. 6,067,350).

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner and submit the following remarks in response.

The present invention as claimed in the independent claims is directed to a method for routing a directory assistance call from a wireless communications device to a directory assistance service having a plurality of geographically separate call centers.

The method includes receiving the call, having an associated communication device identifier unique to the caller's device, at a first directory assistance call center located at one geographic location, the call being routed to the first directory assistance call center based on the communications device identifier. The first directory assistance call center is designated to handle all calls having the communications device identifier regardless of the geographic location of the wireless communication device at the time of the call.

The actual geographic vicinity of the wireless communications device is determined at the first directory assistance call center at the time of the call. A second call center at a different geographic location closer to said vicinity of the wireless communications device is identified at the first directory assistance call center at the time of the call and the call is re-routed to a second directory assistance call center if that second directory assistance call center is closer to the geographic vicinity of the wireless communications device than the first directory assistance call center.

As noted in the prior Amendment, as per the claimed arrangement, an enhanced directory assistance service may employ a plurality of geographically separate directory assistance call centers across the country as shown in Figure 1. In such enhanced directory systems, each call center covers the geographic surrounding area so that directory calls from within their area are routed to them. This is primarily accomplished by an automatic routing system that uses a communication device identifier unique to the caller's device

(eg. the caller's ANI) to estimate the caller's location and then routes the call to the "home" (geographically closest) call center.

However, as noted in paragraph [0030] when a caller is travelling with their mobile phone, their geographic location has changed even when their ANI has not. When they call the enhanced directory system, they are routed based on this unique communication device identifier (ANI) to the caller's home directory assistance call center because, for that system, the first directory assistance call center is designated to handle all calls having said communications device identifier regardless of the geographic location of said wireless communication device at the time of said call.

In such a situation, the first directory assistance call center may recognize that the caller's ANI is not indicative of their physical location based on some geographic location data embedded in the call data, in which case the call is re-routed to a different one (a second) of the directory assistance call centers that is geographically proximate to the caller at the time of the call.

This feature is not shown in any of the prior art references cited by the Examiner.

As discussed in the prior Amendments, where Schaffer was likewise cited against claims 1, 21 and 39, this reference teaches a 1-800 routing system used when a user wants to purchase flowers locally using the nationally advertised toll free number (eg. 1-800-FLOWERS).

In Schaffer there is only one directory assistance call center and that is the call center closest to the caller. There is no routing at all to a first directory assistance call center.

The best description of this process is in Figure 2 and the accompanying

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description called "routing example" starting on line 60 of col. 15 and ending on line 14 of col. 19. In the example, a caller (location A - 160) calls a number directing them to a national service (location B - 162) and is ultimately connected to a local pizza parlor (location C - 164).

The call is initiated by the caller 160 using a national (1-800) number as per col. 16, lines 12-15. As per point 2 (col. 16, lines 15-25) the call is sent to location B 162. However, this location B 162 is not a directory assistance call center. Rather it is a "intelligent central switch." It is simply a routing switch, but has no directory assistance features at all. It does not handle calls in any directory assistance capacity. Location B - 162 (switch) reads the ANI (caller's number), determines their location, compares it to a stored table and sends the call to a geographically close destination (location C - 164 in the Example - see col. 19) . This destination is the first and only call center in Schaffer.

Applicants separately note that in the prior Amendment, the Examiner had argued that the initial receiving location (location B -162) was a "call center." However, Applicants amended claim 1 to include both first and second "directory assistance" call centers. The initial receiving switch in Schaffer, as described above is not a directory assistance call center.

Moreover, even if the Examiner considers the second location B 162 is a "directory assistance call center" the Examiner as best understood from the arguments on page 5 of the Office Action acknowledges that such a device/location in Schaffer does not include the call being routed to the first directory assistance call center based on the communications device identifier, where the first directory assistance call center is designated to handle all calls having the communications device identifier regardless of the

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geographic location of the wireless communication device at the time of the call, as claimed in the independent claims.

To form the rejection, the Examiner suggests that Lautenschlager teaches the features of receiving a call at a first directory assistance system based on a device identifier and then routing to a second directory assistance call center that is geographically closer to the caller as argued on pages 5 and 6 of the Office Action.

This analysis of Lautenschlager is incorrect.

Applicants note that Lautenschlager appears to be a direct translation of the German priority document. However, as best understood it is a system that employs a location database that reviews a caller's telephone number, compares it to a location database and sends the call to an emergency response call center based on the geographic location of the caller as derived from the database. The specification of Lautenschlager is very short on details but it appears to address the issue that, with number portability, the CLI (or apparently the ANI) of the caller, which used to be tightly tied to a specific geographic location, no longer is.

As per claim 1, element 2 of Lautenschlager, when an emergency call is initiated, the system reviews a database entry that is associated with the CLI of the caller, but has a geographic location information that is independent of the CLI prefix (the area code and LEC code of NPA-NXX field). It is not clear from Lautenschlager where this database is located, but as best understood it would be employed by the carrier of the caller or some infrastructure company working with the carrier.

However, there is nothing in Lautenschlager that suggests a transfer from a first call center (directory assistance or otherwise) to another call center. There is only one call

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center in Lautenschlager, and that is the emergency response center that gets the call. The “database” is not a call center.

Applicants are aware that a § 103 rejection cannot be answered by addressing each of the references individually. However, none of the cited references teach or suggest the elements of the claims of the present application.

For example, even if the references were combined as suggested by the Examiner, the resulting system and method would still not teach or suggest all of the elements of the independent claims. For example, there is no teaching or suggestion in either Schaffer or Lautenschlager, either alone or in combination that discloses receiving the call, having an associated communication device identifier unique to the caller’s device, *at a first directory assistance call center located at one geographic location, the call being routed to the first directory assistance call center based on the communications device identifier. The first directory assistance call center* is designated to handle all calls having the communications device identifier regardless of the geographic location of the wireless communication device at the time of the call.

Likewise, there is no teaching or suggestion in either Shaffer or Lautenschlager that discloses that the call is re-routed to *a second directory assistance call center if that second directory assistance call center is closer to the geographic vicinity of the wireless communications device than the first directory assistance call center.*

As such, Applicants request that the rejections of independent claims 1, 21 and 39 be withdrawn. As dependent claims 2-20, 22-38 and 40-42 depend from independent claims 1, 21 and 39 Applicants request that the rejections be removed for at least the same reason.

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In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-42 are in condition for allowance, the earliest possible notice of which is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner feels that an interview would facilitate the prosecution of this Application they are invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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